

None of this would be possible without volunteers. More than 6,000 people contribute 50,000 hours a year of their time. Many community organizations are involved—the Center for Food Action in Mahwah, the Church of the Presentation in Saddle River, Little Sisters of the Poor in Totowa, the NORWESCAP Food Bank in Phillipsburg, Ridgewood United Methodist Church, and the Salvation Army, to name just a few. The Food Bank is also supported by a number of national organizations such as Bread for the World and Second Harvest, of which it is a member.

Businesses play a huge role in the operation of the Food Bank, with more than 250 companies making large-scale donations of food. The companies that work with the Food Bank are among New Jersey's most outstanding corporate citizens clearly showing their concern for the most basic of human needs.

On the day of my visit, more than 200 volunteers were on hand who had been allowed to take the day away from their regular jobs at KPMG Peat Marwick's Montvale and Short Hills offices in order to help sort food for distribution. Their presence was part of KPMG Peat Marwick's "World of Spirit Day," on which 20,000 employees in 130 offices across the country were given the day off with pay in order to volunteer at schools, hospitals, nursing homes, parks, youth centers, and other locations. This is a wonderful innovation on the part of KPMG Peat Marwick and shows the sincere commitment of this corporation to the communities where it does business. I am fully committed to urging other businesses to establish policies following this outstanding example. KPMG Peat Marwick's effort yesterday, in fact, was part of activities being undertaken by 300 companies across the country to fulfill pledges made 6 months ago at the Summit for America's Future. These companies are answering President Clinton and Congress' call for a nation of volunteers by providing free childhood immunizations, donating computer software to public libraries, and providing free books for schools, among other actions.

The Summit for America's Future has sparked a wave of volunteerism, including 150 State and local minisummits that are spreading the word. We must work, however, to ensure that this is not a one-time occurrence and to show that corporate volunteerism is not a fad. Corporate volunteerism is the right thing to do. It is also good business—consumers will see which companies care about the communities around them.

The need for volunteers—and organizations such as the Food Bank—is great. Between 20 and 30 million Americans suffer from hunger, including 1 of every 12 pre-teen children, according to studies by the Congressional Hunger Center and the Food Research and Action Center. Nearly 26 million Americans rely on food banks for emergency food assistance every year. In my own State of New Jersey, more than 500,000 people depend on food stamps to get by each month. Eleven percent of New Jersey children live below the poverty level and almost 300,000 under the age 12 are hungry or at the risk of hunger. Neither the government nor private organizations can help these people without the assistance of volunteers.

Not all of these hungry children and adults are homeless people on the streets or in other obviously distraught situations. Sometimes they are a single mother, earning minimum

wage, who has to decide between getting her car repaired so she can keep her job or buying food to feed her children. A middle-aged homeowner laid off in a corporate downsizing may have exhausted his savings and unemployment benefits. A grandmother living on Social Security might get by on tea and toast in order to pay the rent.

These tragic circumstances in this the most wealthy country in the world must be addressed and eliminated and tragedies such as these are why I am a sponsor of the Hunger Has A Cure Act. The Hunger Has A Cure Act is supported by a large coalition of some of the Nation's largest hunger organizations, including: Bread for the World; the Campaign To End Childhood Hunger; the Center on Hunger, Poverty and Nutrition Policy; Foodchain; the Food Research and Action Center; Results: Second Harvest; Share Our Strength; and World Hunger Year. This bill is essential if we are to protect the safety net for those in need and ensure that the climate of budget cutting in Washington doesn't take the food out of the mouths of hungry babies. As I pledged to the volunteers and directors of the Food Bank yesterday, "I'll be there for you." Just as we saved WIC funding and protected food stamp eligibility this year, I will continue to work to ensure that nutrition programs are protected.

I spent only a short time at the Food Bank but I was inspired to work even harder to complement their work, hard work, energy and dedication, and end hunger in our time. To see the large number of individuals who give freely of their time in order to see that others do not go hungry is heartwarming and inspiring. We have made great progress in caring for the poor and hungry in our Nation but we must do more. We need more organizations like the Food Bank and more individuals like its volunteers. We must all do our part, whether it be by making donations, volunteering time, or helping pass legislation. We cannot stop because the battle will never be won as long as there is one hungry child or adult left in America.

INTRODUCTION OF THE FEDERAL EMPLOYEE THRIFT SAVINGS PLAN ENHANCEMENT ACT

HON. CONSTANCE A. MORELLA

OF MARYLAND

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 23, 1997

Mrs. MORELLA. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation, the Federal Employee Thrift Savings Plan Enhancement Act of 1997, to allow Federal employees to increase their retirement savings. This legislation would bolster a critical component of Federal employee's retirement benefits—the Thrift Savings Plan—at no cost to taxpayers.

The Thrift Savings Plan [TSP] is a retirement savings and investment plan for Federal and postal employees. It offers the same type of savings and tax benefits that many private corporations offer their employees under 401(k) plans. The TSP is critical for all Federal employees, but it is particularly important for those employees hired in the last decade who, under the Federal Employees Retirement System, receive smaller civil service benefits and need to invest more to enhance their retirement income.

Last year, the Congress passed legislation I introduced that added two new funds to the Thrift Savings Plan. Before my bill was enacted, Federal employees were limited to three investment funds: The Government Securities Investment (G) Fund, the Common Stock Index Investment (C) Fund, and the Fixed Income Investment (F) Fund, where 82 percent of the largest corporations offer four or more investment options in their defined contribution plans, and 50 percent offer five or more options. This legislation, however, gave Federal workers two new investment options under the Thrift Savings Plan: a Small Capitalization Stock Index Investment Fund and International Stock Index Fund. These funds offer a long-term investment strategy comparable to private pension plans.

The Congress did not pass, however, the most important component of the bill: a provision to allow Federal employees to invest more of their own money in the TSP. The bill I am introducing today would allow employees to invest up to the IRS limit, \$9,500, to the TSP without changing the Government contribution. Currently, FERS employees can put in up to 10 percent of their salary with a Government match up to 5 percent, and CSRS employees can invest up to 5 percent of their salary. America has one of the lowest saving rates among industrialized countries. It has fallen steadily over the last 20 years, seriously jeopardizing Americans' security during what is supposed to be their golden years. Even though Americans recognize that they should be saving more, half of all family heads in their late fifties possess less than \$10,000 in net financial assets. With the retirement of America's baby boomers approaching, Congress is beginning to consider how we can encourage Americans to save more. This legislation is a sensible way to encourage Federal employees to increase their savings for retirement.

This legislation would also allow employees entering the Federal Government to "roll-in" money from a private sector 401(k) to the TSP, and it would allow those employees entering Federal Service to begin contributing to the TSP immediately, instead of waiting anywhere from 6 to 12 months to begin to save for their retirement. As under current law, the Government's contribution would not begin until the second open season.

Federal employees face uncertainty caused by Federal downsizing, and they are increasingly insecure about their retirement. Please join me in supporting this legislation to enable Federal employees to bolster their retirement benefits.

PERSONAL EXPLANATION

HON. LUIS V. GUTIERREZ

OF ILLINOIS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 23, 1997

Mr. GUTIERREZ. Mr. Speaker, in the afternoon of Wednesday, September 18, 1997, I was unavoidably delayed from reaching this Chamber and therefore missed rollcall vote No. 402, the vote for final passage on the bill making appropriations for the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services and Education, and related agencies for fiscal year 1998. I want the record to show that if I had

been able to be present in this Chamber when this vote was cast, I would have voted "yea."

TRIBUTE TO REPRESENTATIVE
JASON HU

HON. ROBERT SMITH

OF OREGON

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, September 23, 1997

Mr. SMITH of Oregon. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to join my colleagues in paying tribute to

Representative Jason Hu on his promotion to the esteemed post of Taiwan's foreign minister.

Representative Hu's promotion requires his return to Taipei and we will miss him a great deal. Representative Hu has been a tireless diplomat for Taiwan and has represented his country's interests well.

Representative Hu is constantly seeking to improve the relations between Taiwan and the United States. He is a true advocate of his country's causes. I commend President Lee

for his choice of Representative Hu as Taiwan's top diplomat.

I will miss Representative Hu's presence in Washington but I know for sure that we will have a friend in Taipei who truly understands us and the United States. I urge my colleagues to join me in congratulating Representative Hu and in giving him a fond farewell.